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KOREA COMES NEXT

By William Henry Chamberlin

Almost all the news that comes from Korea is bad news. The picture is so dismal that none need be surprised by intimations that half a billion may be asked of the American taxpayer to aid that partitioned country, if emergency appropriations for Greece and Turkey are pushed through.

It is probably a safe assumption that this former Japanese dependency, now divided into American and Soviet zones of occupation between which there is no normal intercourse, is in many ways worse off materially than when it formed an integral part of the Japanese Empire and the Japanese economy. "Liberation" is a mockery for Korea.

One can only understand Korea's troubles by considering the historical, political and geographical background of the situation in that Oriental country, with its approximately 25,000,000 inhabitants. Korea occupies a crossroads position on the map of East Asia. The Korean peninsula is shaped like a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan. It is only about 100 miles across the Strait of Tsushima from Shimonoseki, at the southern end of Japan's main island, Honshu, to Fusan, in Korea.

Korea borders on Manchuria and for many centuries was one of the outlying satellite States of the Chinese Empire. There is a short, but politically important, boundary between Korea and Russia. Vladivostok, Soviet stronghold on the Pacific, is within easy bombing range of such Korean towns as Rashin and Seishin.

So it was almost predestined that in the modern anarchy of clashing nation-states, Korea should become an apple of discord between Japan, China and Russia. Japan's warrior ruler Hideyoshi made a serious effort to conquer Korea late in the Sixteenth Century. But after his death the Japanese troops were withdrawn and Japan lapsed into the prolonged self-imposed isolationism of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

When the West knocked imperiously on the doors of the East in the last half of the Nineteenth Century the struggle for Korea became intense. A rather vague and sketchy Japanese-Chinese condominium over the backward State came to an end after Japan defeated China in 1894-95. Russia then entered the Korean picture, but its intrigues failed and one of the principal results of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 was the establishment of undisputed Japanese hegemony. Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910.

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The balance sheet of Japanese rule in Korea was not unlike that of many other colonial enterprises. There were striking improvements in railway and road construction, in public order and sanitation, in technical efficiency of administration.

At the same time the Japanese (like the British, Dutch and French in their colonies) were obviously not in Korea for their health, nor for altruistic purposes. The cream of the profits from the development of Korea's industries, mines and agricultural resources was industriously skimmed off by the big Japanese companies then exploiting the country.

The administration was paternalistic. Some Koreans were given honorary posts on advisory councils. But the Japanese Governor-General remained the final authority. Especially during the last decade of Japanese rule there was a strenuous effort to substitute the Japanese for the Korean language. There was little higher education in Korea itself, but thousands of young Koreans were encouraged to attend the Imperial University and similar institutions in Japan. There they received a more or less effective indoctrination in conventional Japanese ideas.

A nationalistic rising flared up in 1919, as part of the general ferment after World War I. But it was suppressed with considerable severity and most of the leaders, including Dr. Syngman Rhee and Kim Koo, fled to foreign countries.

Foreign missionary schools in Korea, although kept under close surveillance by the Japanese authorities, continued to nurture a mild nationalism among their students. But there was little opportunity for widespread nationalist organization or agitation. Now and then there would be a protest, such as printing a photograph of a Korean athlete who took part in the Olympic Games without the Japanese Rising Sun emblem. But Korea, heavily policed and with part of its population on the way to assimilation, was not a serious military problem for Japan during the war.

There were two main currents in the Korean nationalist movement abroad. A democratic Korean "government-in-exile," headed by Kim Koo, functioned in Chungking. The Korean People's Emancipation League, in Yenan, represented the Communist wing of the Korean political emigres. The two groups competed for the allegiance of Korean prisoners and deserters.

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The first official declaration of inter-allied purpose about Korea was contained in the Cairo Declaration of December, 1943, signed by Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek:

> "The aforesaid great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent."

The moral impressiveness of this statement would have been enhanced if there had been some reference to freedom and independence for the equally "enslaved" peoples of the Western colonial empires. And the somewhat vague phrase "in due course" aroused distrust and dissatisfaction in Korean nationalist circles.

It was agreeed at Potsdam, in July, 1945, on the eve of Russia's last-minute entrance into the Far Eastern war, that the 38th parallel of latitude should be an arbitrary line of demarcation between American and Soviet forces. Twenty months after the Japanese capitulation what was first conceived as a matter of temporary military convenience has hardened into a political, social and economic frontier.

There was no rhyme or reason for making a boundary out of a geographical abstraction. The cutting of Korea into two isolated fragments has produced much the same disastrous results as in Germany and Austria. South Korea normally produces a surplus of rice, while the more barren Russian zone contains fuel and electrical power. Both sections have been impoverished by the interruption of communication.

There was an abortive effort to break the deadlock after the Moscow visit of former Secretary Byrnes in December, 1945. It was agreed between the United States and Soviet Governments that a united Korean government should be set up under a five-year joint trusteeship. All the Korean political parties except the Communists protested against this postponement of the goal of independence; the Communists accepted the idea, presumably under pressure from Moscow.

However, up to the present time no progress toward unification has been achieved. American and Soviet representatives met between March and May, 1946; but the conference ended in a complete deadlock. The Soviet representatives demanded that parties which had opposed the trusteeship plan should not be eligible for participation in the government. As this would have excluded all but the Communists, the American delegation refused to accept the proposal. No further progress has been reported. On the contrary, General Hodge recently mentioned steps under way in the Soviet Zone to form a Korean Red Army of half a million men.

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The familiar inability to reconcile American and Soviet conceptions of that elastic word, democracy, has been an important reason for the sorry plight of Korea. After 20 months of "liberation" the country is plagued with inflation, food shortage and industrial paralysis. Some of the conditions of the German occupation have been reproduced in Korea, although the latter is deemed a friendly, not an enemy, nation.

The Soviet authorities in the northern part of the country, operating with the aid of picked Korean Communists, carried out a ruthless social revolution, dividing up the land among the Korean peasants. But the requisitions for the benefit of the occupying Soviet forces have been so severe and insecurity of life and property has been so general that hundreds of thousands of Koreans have fled from the Soviet area into American-occupied South Korea, a parallel to the picture in Europe. Yet conditions there are so far from satisfactory that some Koreans have lately been smuggling themselves over to Japan.

General Hodge, who is honored by the continued sniping attacks of fellow travellers in this country, has probably been doing as good a job of military occupation as could be expected. But he has been working under very difficult handicaps. He has never been supplied with an adequate technical staff for a long-term occupation.

Our military administration in South Korea started out with a very inadequate appreciation of two facts. There were extremely few trained Korean industrial managers, engineers and similar specialists. And the Korean economy had been closely meshed with that of Japan. In many cases Korean plants cannot function without parts from factories in Japan. With the forced repatriation of the Japanese, and the suspension of economic ties between the two countries, the driving force that made the wheels of the Korean economy revolve has been eliminated. Some of these same difficulties have been cropping up in Formosa, as recent disturbances in that island suggest.

A Soviet-dominated Korea would be a very serious threat to the prospects of a future democratic Japan. But political and economic confusion and stagnation in South Korea play into the hands of Soviet agents. What might revive the country would be a resumption of mutually beneficial economic ties between Japan and South Korea, along with the blood transfusion of American capital and technical skill which the State, War and Navy Departments are now discussing.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. IV, NO. 13

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By Frank C. Hanighen March 26, 1947

The War Department's proposal for six-month universal military training system, if enacted, "would prove a 100 per cent failure to meet our needs," say dissident elements in the Pentagon. These officers list seven requirements for military preparedness: (1) stronger intelligence service; (2) better scientific research and new weapon development; (3) a striking air force of 70 (not 40 as at present) groups, equipped with B-36's, ready for any emergency; (4) a navy capable of controlling the sea lanes to Europe and Asia; (5) garrisons overseas adequate for policing and holding vital areas if attacked; (6) an expeditionary force of 100,000 to 150,000 capable of being sent overseas at any time; (7) cadres at home for creation of a mass army if necessary. Obviously these critics are not precisely what one would call pacifist. Secretary Patterson and General Eisenhower might do worse than listen to their advice.

The War Department proposal, it is pointed out, assists none of these objectives save the last. It could obviously be of no assistance to (1) intelligence service and (2) science. As for (3), the air forces cannot use six-month draftees, and (4) the Navy does not want them. Such partly-trained soldiers are not suitable for (5) overseas duty, nor for (6) a highly-trained expeditionary force. As for (7), we do not need partly-trained reservists, because we already have 10 million fully trained reservists, four million of whom are 30 years old or under.

The dissidents in the Pentagon claim that the six-month training measure would actually result in the establishment of two armies, of differing composition and combat value: a regular army, and a conscript army. The two would engage in an unseemly competition for funds, and for the attention of the General Staff. And the end product would be two bad armies, instead of a single good one.

They readily admit that there may arise a situation demanding a mass conscript army. That depends on how long it may be before such an emergency arises. If war should come within the next two or three years, a conscript army would be needed. Should this be the case, however, our present pool of trained reservists would be adequate. On the other hand, if war should not come for five to ten years, then much money and the intervening time might well be wasted in the maintenance of such an establishment. Warfare, they stress, is in a revolutionary, transitory stage. A transitory situation calls for a transitory solution -- such as outlined in the first paragraph above. We should make our blueprints for situations which might arise in the next two or three years, and those do not call for a mass conscript army, the aim of the six-month military training proposal.

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State Department. Some parts of the President's epochal speech to Congress asking aid for Greece and Turkey contained verbatim passages from State Department confidential reports. Officials were amazed when they saw these in the speech, for they expected the White House to modify some of the strong language. Presumably the President was of the opinion "the tougher the better."

Expert advice on the Greek-Turkish proposal came from Loy Henderson, old-line State Department official and head of the Near Eastern Division. Henderson was a pre-Pearl Harbor isolationist. He predicted that if the United States entered the war it would end much as it has -- with Russia the menace. While entertaining no illusions about the Soviet Union, he is no "red-baiter," nor "reactionary," as the Left press has often alleged.

There is some concern in those State Department circles which support the Hoover ideas about Germany because Dr. Charles P. Kindleberger (see NMG, February

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5, 1947), head of the division of German and Austrian economic affairs, accompanied Marshall to Moscow. Dr. Kindleberger and his division are regarded as critical of Hoover's plans and leaning toward the old Morgenthau ideas.

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With Harry S. Truman obviously slated to be Democratic standard-bearer in 1948, there is naturally speculation as to who will be his running mate. The recent exertions of Mr. J. A. Krug, Secretary of the Interior, have not gone unnoticed. When Truman's stock touched bottom last fall, it was rumored that Krug had ideas about the candidacy for President on the Democratic ticket. But, today, with the President enjoying a revival of popularity, Krug's notions are said to have become more modest. His soaring fancy now runs to Throttlebottom.

Hence the tireless travels of the Secretary of the Interior to remote parks and far-off dams, where somehow he manages to say "a few words," not unheard by the press. Whether the topic is hydroelectric power, or wild life conservation or the plight of the noble Red Man, Mr. Krug manages to be statesmanlike. Meanwhile, he is said to be seeking a Maecenas to support adequately his political efforts.

As ruler of the coal mines, he has asked the operators' and mine workers' representatives to meet for a conference to adjust their differences. Interior circles claim, perhaps too enthusiastically, that their chief holds at least one strong card: he can threaten to return the mines to the owners April 30 instead of June 30, as scheduled. This -- they say -- would be a club over the United Mine Workers, which would rather not call a strike while Congress is in session. Be that as it may. The boosters in the Department of the Interior maintain that their chief is in a good position to emerge from the coal negotiations as a national figure.

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White House. Internecine jealousy and strife mark Truman's Palace Guard much as they did Roosevelt's. Steelman by no means discourages talk that Clark Clifford's stock is waning; Clifford wastes no time boosting Steelman's prestige. Neither is fond of Les Biffle, the real liaison between the President and the Democratic Minority on the Hill. But it is believed that only two men have a decisive influence on the President: Charley Ross, White House press chief and old Missouri friend, and Admiral Leahy, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The President recently took a trip to Mexico, which was partly official business but might also be described as a vacation. It is noted that following his Greek-Turkey speech to Congress, he took a "rest" trip to Key West. This sequence has aroused some comment from waspish Republicans. Truman is obviously in good health. Was he then shrinking from difficult situations by absenting himself from the Capital?

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Mr. Herbert Hoover's Report No. 3 on German economy attracted wide praise and drew no criticism. The fact that neither the Daily Worker nor PM attacked it is a straw in the wind. Last week Molotov came out for high-level production in German industry -- one of the basic points of the Hoover plan. Either this new official Russian policy or the prevailing defensive attitude of Communists and fellow travellers may account for the silence from that quarter. The lack of opposition, in general, to Hoover's report suggests that the principal influence behind supporters of the Morgenthau idea, at least in recent months, was the Left.

Mr. Hoover's report dealt with the de-Nazification problem briefly, saying merely that certain phases of the process limit recovery. It is believed that the former President sought to confine his report to the more purely economic aspects of

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the German problem. The economic loss in terms of manpower is thought to be very considerable. One competent observer claims that the number of highly qualified people kept idle by the de-Nazification process runs well into seven figures.

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Congress. Behind Republican differences on tax reduction lies much more than principles. Leaders wrangle about the very practical question of whether or not there will be a budgetary surplus to distribute in tax cuts next year, an election year. Some doubt the possibility of a surplus, if tax reductions are made this year, and favor saving the manna for the voters until next year. Others are confident that they can swing the matter next year as well as this. Besides they would like to have something nice to tell their constituents during the coming Easter recess.

Taft supporters say that the Senator's aid-to-education plan faces a brighter future because a prominent Catholic prelate has withdrawn his opposition to the bill and has urged other Catholic leaders to do likewise. Catholic criticism has been a considerable obstacle in some parts of the country. Another item in the Taft liberal program -- the housing bill -- reportedly faces a favorable course through the Senate, but not in the House.

Members of Congress are generally worried about the Greek-Turkish credit, but this column has been told even by outspoken opponents that the measure will pass. However, some bitter criticism will be voiced on the floor. It is rumored that Senator George A. Wilson (Iowa) plans to deliver a strong speech in opposition.

Observers regret the excessive zeal of the House in sharply cutting funds for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, one of the Government bodies with a good record for accuracy and freedom from political influences. Also, a group of conservative economists has asked that funds be restored for some kind of voluntary labor conciliation service.

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Cripples, perfectly restored to health of limb, have been known to demand crutches for no other reason than that they fear to walk without them. Some such psychological "block" apparently affected the Republican leadership of the House Banking Committee when it reported out a bill renewing the wartime power of the Treasury to borrow directly from the Federal Reserve banks. The measure would extend for three years the authority of the reserve banks granted under the Second War Powers Act to purchase Government securities directly from the United States Treasury. The Committee favorably reported the bill on the ground that the Treasury needs "this line of credit to meet temporary situations and contingencies." Committee Chairman Wolcott (Mich.) thus seems to be suffering from the psychological delusion that our free enterprise economy is still "crippled" and cannot walk unaided by Government. He yielded to the demands of Marriner S. Eccles, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, to retain this war power measure.

Wolcott is undoubtedly sincere in his attitude. Nevertheless he apparently has underestimated the potential danger in such an extension of power. Two Republican members of the Committee -- Frederick C. Smith (O.) and Howard Buffett (Nebr.) -- filed a minority dissenting report which states the perils of this course. "What Mr. Eccles wants and this bill would O.K. is Treasury power to issue fiat money to pay its bills -- whenever its actions have exhausted public confidence. Since the beginning of time, political rulers, when expenditures have exceeded tax collections, have regularly resorted to manufacturing money by one process or another. This measure is the latest of these attempts at 'push button' money. . . . The crushing burdens of inflation always fall most heavily upon the laboring people and poor, upon those of unqestioning faith in their Government. In simple justice to these humble people we urge our colleagues to protect them from this short-cut route to ruinous all-out currency inflation and the terrifying consequences that would follow."

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Notes and Quotes

The following letter from a constituent -- incidentally not a Union League Club member, but a filling station attendant -- to his Congressman is the kind of communication that has Republicans on Capitol Hill worried: "Well, it looks to me like the man from Prendergastville has knocked your budget-cutting plans into a cocked hat. I was not at all surprised at the turn events have taken. I was hoping you Republicans would sort of take the bit in your teeth and kinda run things. That's what I and several million other people voted for. But I guess the Republicans have been away too long. The rules of the game have been changed so much that they don't know how to play it. Those that did stick around during the Roosevelt Administration became so indoctrinated with New Deal philosophy that they can't longer think as Republicans.

"Here is what I mean -- Back in the Mark Hanna and Harding days you Republicans (I'm a Democrat) used to kick around a few million bucks and shake a few plum trees and thought you were really handling big money -- remember? Then came FDR and the New Deal cut down the plum trees and planted cocoanut trees of the super variety -- and shook the hell out of them, for the benefit of the chosen. Instead of millions, the boys got to playing with billions just like you Republicans used to play with millions. The truth is as I see it, you boys are not used to these big figures. It is like a kid from the sand lots going into the big league. No kidding, the figures are just too big. You don't have any money, you know. You are putting it all on the cuff. You just can't get away from that. Now you are asked to declare an undercover war. What are you going to finance it with? More cuff. You know there is such a thing as running out of cuff, and then what?"

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From a speech by Alf M. Landon, March 19, 1947: ". . . if we are to save Europe from Communism . . . we must break flatly and finally with the infamous Morgenthau plan. We must reshape our policy in Germany. That is consuming time, money and manpower which can be used to a better advantage. Furthermore, it actually is not accomplishing anything. Germany is the heart of Europe. We have been destroying Europe by our policies. We must help them rebuild. We cannot rule them indefinitely. Europe is like a patient with coronary thrombosis. We have got to treat the heart instead of massaging the feet and the hands, which are Greece and Turkey."

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Paul Hutchinson in the Christian Century (March 19) puts the present labor situation in an historical perspective: "We must expect excesses on the part of labor in using its new-found power. Historically speaking, every class or institution that has gained great power has abused it -- and that includes the church. Labor will be no different. The public interest will have to be protected against labor's misuse of power. (There will be difficulties at times in distinguishing the public interest from the interest of the labor majority, but that is one of the perennial problems of democracy.) But the public interest has always had to be protected from the holders of power -- recall again the Hanna Aldrich period -- so that there is no sense in acting now as though labor's excesses constitute an unparalleled depravity. What we face here is the truth of the familiar dictum of Lord Acton: "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

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A century ago, Heinrich Heine said: "Napoleon's words at St. Helena -- that in the near future the world would be either an American republic, or a Russian universal monarchy -- are a discouraging prophecy. What a prospect for us -- at best, to die as a republican from monotonous boredom." (Franzosische Zustande.)

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